Sustainable Development – Education and Youth

What You Told Us...

Development in Harmony With Our Environment

Manitoba Round Table
for Sustainable Development

Manitoba

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE
MANITOBA ROUND TABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

To all Manitobans:

I am pleased to present to you the *Sustainable Development Education and Youth ... What You Told Us* report. This report summarizes comments gathered in the public participation process on sustainable development education, undertaken by the former Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development and the former Manitoba Youth Round Table for Sustainable Development in 1998. Public comments were received through focus groups, public meetings and a youth conference.

The comments resulting from the public participation process are being reviewed by the new Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development. Based on the public comments, a sustainable development education strategy will be developed by the Manitoba Round Table. The Manitoba Round Table will then recommend the strategy to government for adoption.

On behalf of the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development and the Youth Round Table for Sustainable Development, I would like to thank all those who devoted their time and energy to the Educating for Sustainable Development focus groups, public meetings and Youth Conference on Sustainable Development. The Manitoba Round Table will create a strategy that includes formal and non-formal education and that has meaning for all Manitobans. Your advice will guide the Manitoba Round Table as it develops this strategy.

Sincerely,

Jillian Maguet
Chair,
Education and Communication Committee of the
Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development

Educating For Sustainable Development:
Results of 1998 Focus Group Testing, Youth Conference and Open Public Meetings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September/October 1998, the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development (MRT) and Manitoba Education and Training initiated a public participation process, to gain public input on the idea of developing a Sustainable Development Education Strategy for Manitoba. The basis for the public participation process was an *Educating for Sustainable Development* concept paper. In November 1998, the Manitoba Youth Round Table for Sustainable Development (YRT) held a youth conference to discuss sustainable development issues.

Both sets of participants were asked a similar series of questions related to education and sustainable development.

The objectives of the public participation processes were:

- To seek preliminary public response to the Manitoba Round Table's concept paper, *Educating for Sustainable Development.*

- To develop draft policies and actions for a youth sustainable development strategy, and integrate findings into the education strategy.

- To assess the public's knowledge and awareness of sustainable development at all ages, and receive their advice on how they wish government to educate for sustainable development.

There were three public participation processes used:

1. Structured focus group testing that required individual participants to respond orally to eight previously developed questions.

2. Informal open public meetings.

3. A workshop style youth conference that required participants to respond orally to six of the eight questions used in the focus group testing.

This mixed approach offered a broader opportunity for collection and assessment of public feedback than would have been available through selecting individual participants. It also eliminated the possibility that interested individuals or groups might feel excluded from the process.

In recognition of regional diversity in Manitoba, the Manitoba Round Table and the Department of Education and Training set up thirteen focus groups and eight open public meetings in seven regions.

The regions selected were Thompson, Dauphin, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Steinbach, Winkler, and Winnipeg. Focus group participants were selected from each region and the public meetings were publicized in local and regional media.

The YRT held the Youth Conference on Sustainable Development on November 13, 1998, at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg. Over 70 young people from across Manitoba attended to discuss issues related to sustainable development and to develop draft policies and actions for a youth sustainable development strategy.

Overall, the comments received from the open public meetings, focus group meetings and the youth conference were similar, regardless of meeting format, age, or region.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS FINDINGS

Overall, the respondents:

- Supported an overall sustainable development education strategy – delivered through the formal and informal education systems – with ongoing outreach program development and communication and education of sustainable development concepts.

- Supported the integration of sustainable development into existing curricula to show the interconnection between disciplines.

- Wanted an approach to educating for sustainable development that would include a strong presence for the government of Manitoba and vigorous community outreach and communications.

- Felt the *Educating for Sustainable Development* concept paper was too complex, too vague, and too theoretical. Its application was seen as impractical and problematic.

- Showed support for an action plan for sustainable development education.

- Displayed a lack of understanding about the origins of sustainable development policy and its present day application, as well as the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development's function and relation to government. There was an overall perception that the government of Manitoba is performing poorly in implementation of its sustainable development strategies, mainly due to poor communication about what initiatives have been implemented.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the findings are as follows:

- A low level of response and participation when measured against communications sent. In total, only 117 participants attended the focus group testing and open public meetings.

- Lack of participation by First Nations in the open meetings. There was some participation in the focus group sessions (e.g., in Brandon and Thompson).

- A disproportionate number of government workers and people already connected to this policy area attended as participants, as compared to other stakeholders.

- The process differed at each meeting, as it was participant-directed to facilitate greater understanding of the concept of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

In September/October 1998, the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development (MRT) and Manitoba Education and Training initiated a public consultation process in order to gain public opinion and input regarding the notion of developing a a proposed Sustainable Development Education Strategy for the province of Manitoba. On November 13, 1998 the Manitoba Youth Round Table for Sustainable Development (YRT) held a youth conference on sustainable development that asked six of the eight questions discussed in the MRT focus groups. Two questions were omitted from the youth conference component because they were specific to the review of the *Educating for Sustainable Development* concept paper.

Members of the former provincial government's MRT and YRT carried out the public participation processes. The information collected from the open public meetings and the focus group sessions was analyzed and summarized by the Chair of the former MRT Education Subcommittee. A report was not distributed to the public.

The new MRT feel it is important to address the concerns and suggestions brought forth by the public when developing a sustainable development education strategy. They feel it would be useful to integrate information from the Youth Round Table Conference into the *Sustainable Development Education ... What You Told Us*, and then distribute it to the public.

Under the direction of the MRT, government staff incorporated the Youth Round Table Conference findings into the sustainable development education open public meeting and focus group findings. This *Education and Youth ... What You Told Us* is a summary of both public participation processes, and is not a complete transcription of all public comments collected in the processes.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the public participation processes were:

- To seek preliminary public response to the Manitoba Round Table's concept paper, *Educating for Sustainable Development* (Appendix A).

- To develop draft policies and actions for a youth sustainable development strategy, and integrate findings into an education strategy.

- To assess the public's knowledge and awareness of sustainable development at all ages, and receive their advice on how they wish government to educate for sustainable development.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

There were three approaches used in the public participation process to provide the Manitoba Round Table, the Youth Round Table and the Department of Education and Training with broad based public direction for the proposed Sustainable Development Education Strategy and the beginnings of a Youth Strategy. These three approaches were:

1. Structured focus group testing which required individual participants to respond orally to eight previously developed questions.
2. Informal open public meetings.
3. Workshop style youth conference.

This mixed approach offered a broader opportunity for collection and assessment of public feedback than would have been available through selecting individual participants. It also eliminated the possibility that interested individuals or groups might feel excluded from the process.

In recognition of regional diversity in Manitoba, the Manitoba Round Table and the Manitoba Education, Training and Youth set up thirteen focus groups and eight open public meetings in seven regions. The regions selected were Thompson, Dauphin, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Steinbach, Winkler and Winnipeg.

Focus group participants were selected from each region through contact with formal and non-formal education institutions, regional business and industry, financial institutions, health care institutions, Aboriginal groups, municipal and local government authorities, the media, religious institutions, environmental organizations, and random selection through regional phone directories.

Open public sessions were publicized in local and regional media. Notification by letter was sent to all MLAs and municipal authorities, all Aboriginal Chiefs, and through concentrated networking with all regional and provincial branches of education and training.

All those invited to participate in focus groups were also given the option of attending the open public session. In addition, opportunity for Francophone participation was provided in Winnipeg.

From May through August, 1998, an invitation package consisting of a letter, a concept paper and a list of open public session locations and times was sent by mail, fax, and/or courier to all those identified in the above list of selected categories. All contacts who did not respond were followed up with a minimum of one telephone call. The focus group questions were not sent in advance to participants. Each respondent received a confirmation call one day before all sessions.

Appendix B presents information on focus group, public meeting and youth conference dates, locations, attendance numbers and invitee numbers. Manitoba Education and

Training provided recorder and facilitation training by Research Consultant, Dr. Joan McClaren, Ph.D. Trainees were from the following areas: Manitoba Education and Training, Manitoba Environment, Manitoba Round Table, International Institute for Sustainable Development and Fort Whyte Centre. All public meetings and focus group sessions were audiotaped and transcribed. Due to confidentially concerns, recorders erased audiotapes upon submission of their written report.

Youth from across Manitoba were invited, through a newspaper advertisement put out by the Youth Round Table for Sustainable Development, to attend the Youth Conference on Sustainable Development. The YRT held the conference on Friday, November 13, 1998, at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg. Over 70 young people from across Manitoba attended to discuss issues related to sustainable development and to develop draft policies and actions for a youth sustainable development strategy.

A morning plenary session consisted of presentations by the Chair of the MRT on ten years of sustainable development in the government of Manitoba, the Chair of the YRT on activities of the YRT, and a member of the MRT on sustainable development in the private sector.

Following the plenary session, participants were divided into smaller groups to share their perspectives and discuss six fundamental questions related to sustainable development. Groups were facilitated by Aboriginal youth selected by the host facility. Participants returned to an afternoon plenary session to provide the results of their smaller groups.

The method of information gathering differed at each public meeting and focus group session and between the three participation processes, as each was participant-directed to facilitate greater understanding of the concept of sustainable development. Thus, the analysis of the results from all three public participation processes will be general and qualitative, versus specific and quantitative.

DATA ANALYSIS

A. FOCUS GROUP TESTING AND YOUTH ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The following is an analysis of the comments collected from the Youth Conference and the focus groups. **Please note that all direct quotes are italicized.**

Question 1. What does the term "sustainable development" mean to you?

- Youth considered sustainable development to mean
  - *commitment to an environmentally conscious lifestyle demonstrated through personal choices and behaviours,*
  - *the balancing of economic interests and environmental integrity,* and
  - *ensuring future generations have equal opportunity for a high quality of life while meeting the needs of present generations.*

- Overall, focus groups and youth seemed to enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to discuss sustainable development, and were thoughtful and effective in their answers. Most groups understood the concept of sustainable development and were able to apply it in the context of their community. Groups had concern about the term *sustainable development* although most groups understood what the concept meant, particularly after reading the concept paper. Although groups recognized the need to balance environment, economic and social factors, they expressed some concern about the ability to balance those factors. Groups tended to emphasize *environmental concerns/issues* more readily than health and well being and/or economic concerns/issues, but they felt that government has adopted an 'economic' focus for sustainable development. *Economic sustainable development, rather than sustainable development in which environment, economy and social well being are more balanced, remains the priority for government and industry.*

- There was a wide range of opinions involving the scope of sustainable development. Some saw it as having a global and an intergenerational reach, whereas others interpreted it more contextually, relating to local concerns about jobs, health care, etc.

- Much more focus was placed on practical action-oriented aspects of sustainable development, as compared with theoretical, conceptual and political aspects.

- Groups conveyed that they were ready for action. Government action was given high priority, particularly in areas of education and health. Perceived lack of implementation by government in carrying out its own sustainable development policies was an area of criticism by a number of groups: *Government talks policies, but there is little action.*

- There was an overall awareness of reduced consumption, conservation and recycling as important components of sustainable development. It was felt that the focus for sustainable development should rest on changing human behaviour.

- Some groups saw poverty, equity (among people living now and future generations), democracy and citizenship as being a part of sustainable development.

- Some groups defined sustainable development broadly to include the preservation of all living species while other groups focused on conserving renewable and nonrenewable resources for human sustainability.

Question 2. Does the concept paper make sense and does it improve your understanding of sustainable development?

- With the exception of one focus group, there was an overall appreciation of the purpose of the concept paper. Some groups expressed that the paper helped with the understanding of sustainable development and helped raise awareness. One focus group suggested trashing or restructuring the document because it was *vague and full of jargon* while other groups stated that the concept paper improved their understanding of sustainable development.

- Seven focus groups expressed concern about the presentation and language of the concept paper in terms of being *too complex*, *too wordy* and *too academic and abstract*. Most groups found the vocabulary too advanced.

- Several groups expressed concern that the paper did not relate to concrete examples and consequently may not have an effect on people in the community. *Case studies and stories of sustainable development would be more beneficial.*

- Reaching every age group was seen as important, however the concept paper was seen to be limited in that respect.

- One group expressed concern that the concept paper should consider information in an Aboriginal context, given the size of the Aboriginal population in Manitoba.

- There was mixed reaction to the Venn diagram model on the cover of the concept paper (three overlapping circles – environment, economy and human health and social well being, with the overlap being "quality of life"). Some were confused about the interconnections. Some saw the diagram as facilitating the understanding of sustainable development.

- Some groups suggested that a plan be developed to implement sustainable development. *It is important that the paper include an action strategy for education for sustainable development. The strategy should include videos, CD Roms, posters directed towards youth. The plan should show clear direction (vision, goals, behavioural changes)* and *should take less than six months.*

Question 3. How might sustainable development affect your day to day life and the choices you make?

- All groups and youth expressed that sustainable development affected all the daily decisions/choices they make. Examples included what they purchase (and where they purchase from), what they recycle, whether they compost, what they consume (food and material goods and services), job choices, what they drive, what they choose for appliances, whether to become involved in the community (or not).

- Youth stated that *changing consumption patterns of goods and services, conserving natural areas and promoting green space in our communities* and *endorsing and advocating for products, services and behaviours that are environmentally friendly* is how sustainable development affects their day to day lives and the choices they make.

- Nine groups and youth viewed change in values and attitudes as the primary facilitator for incorporation of sustainable development in day to day life.

- Six groups and youth identified education as being essential to the changes identified above.

- All groups referred to government policy and leadership and resources as being essential to changing individual day to day life choices. Areas specified by the groups were: agricultural regulation, pollution and environmental degradation, recycling and facilitating reduced consumption, provision of education, rural development especially in the north, and sustainable transportation options.

- All groups and youth saw the link between choices they make now as having long-term effects.

Question 4. Who are advocates for sustainable development and how do they differ from those who are not?

- Youth suggested that advocates of sustainable development are individuals that *lead by example* and these leaders *are found in all sectors of our community*. Special recognition was given to educators who, as advocates, actively include teaching about sustainable development in schools. Additionally, it was felt that certain groups (business, media, educators) and sectors (all levels and branches of government and industry) as well as community leaders have a responsibility to advocate for sustainable development. Youth feel that these groups most often fall short of this responsibility. Youth are looking for leadership on, and reinforcement of, sustainable development practices in their community.

- All groups and youth saw advocates for sustainable development coming from all sectors of life: government, media, community, individuals, First Nations, families, business and industry, educators, people with knowledge, kids and youths. Non-advocates were considered people that did not care.

- One group viewed *everyone* as claiming to be an advocate. It was noted that the market system itself may not necessarily support sustainable development.

- Four groups saw *advocacy* as an important issue at the community level. Raising awareness raising and outreach was felt to be critical to develop communities committed to sustainable development.

- All groups and youth viewed advocates as those individuals and groups of individuals who make life choices consistent with sustainability. Actions were seen as critical to advocacy.

Question 5: Before being involved in this focus group, what had you heard about sustainable development and what was the source of information?

- Youth gain knowledge of sustainable development in schools and, to a lesser extent, the media. While many youth recognize sustainable development practices as common sense, the specific term is unfamiliar.

- All groups except one identified their dominant sources of information as school and university, government department for which they work or a professional association. Two focus groups identified the media as a source. One group identified the International Institute for Sustainable Development as a source. One group gave importance *to personal contacts, personal experience,* and *word-of-mouth.* Youths identified teachers, David Suzuki, newspapers, environmental studies courses, student unions, family, friends, and the media as dominant sources.

- Two groups sighted childhood experience as their first source of information regarding environmental concerns, which later enhanced their ability to understand the concept of sustainable development.

Question 6. What are the best ways to involve everyone and who should be involved?

- Youths suggested that sustainable development issues and opportunities must receive more publicity in the media (news, advertising campaigns). Education and awareness campaigns need to be youth focussed and competitive with current standards in entertainment and advertising. This could include celebrity spokespersons, advertising on youth focussed programming and marketing sustainable development at large entertainment events specifically created for the purpose. Youth want incentives to participate in, and be rewarded for, positive action for sustainable development through new opportunities, professional development, and personal recognition and grants for education and research.

- All groups and youth were in agreement that sustainable development must involve everyone. Specific groups mentioned included educational institutions (professional development for teachers), all levels of government, business and industry, community based groups, children and youth, interest groups, political and community leaders, all levels of government including the civil service and parental advisory councils.

- Youth suggested that schools should involve youth in sustainable development initiatives.

- Two groups assigned special status to Aboriginal peoples.

- Strong emphasis was put on media as not being used to full potential to promote sustainable development – radio stations (including local), newspapers, television, Internet, advertisements. *Participaction* was one example given.

- Four groups wished to see strong leadership from government, including regulation and legislation.

- Three groups and youth supported the use of participatory forums, public awareness campaigns, practical application projects, and other community events as important methods of involvement and outreach.

- Two groups and youth stressed that it was important for sustainable development to be part of the education curriculum, and then broadened from the school system into the community.

- Youth suggested that a reward system should be put in place and more publicity could be made use of.

Question 7. What educational strategies should we use?

- All groups felt the concept paper needed to be simplified and made more dynamic. *The paper is dry reading.*

- Several groups placed an emphasis on community or local approaches to change.

- Several groups recommended that an interdisciplinary approach be used to integrate sustainable development throughout the existing curriculum at all grades. This should be applied to informal education and outreach however possible.

- Four groups stressed public awareness campaigns through radio, television and advertising pamphlets.

- Three groups placed priority on training qualified speakers to do outreach between and within communities (workshops, conferences, round table processes, etc.). *Jurisdictions need to work together.*

- One group identified the importance of having a sustainable development education coordinator available to educators and community groups to facilitate discussions.

- *Sustainable development demonstration projects* and hands on learning were given high priority as outreach tools. Involvement of youth was seen to be important.

- Most groups gave top priority to increased government support of education, through financial and human resources. Education was identified as the key component in the transition to sustainable development. *Only 1% of prison population has post-secondary education, education is cheap in comparison to incarceration and health care costs.*

- Youth gave a top priority to making sustainable development part of the curriculum at all levels. Specific emphasis was placed on continuing with integration in high schools and linking it with social studies, life skills, and other subject areas. Youth also put a strong emphasis on a mandatory requirement for individual schools to follow the *three R's* and other sustainability practices.

- Youth emphasized the importance of providing and identifying teaching strategies for teachers and parents who are attempting to teach sustainability concepts in the classrooms and at home.

- Youth suggested the integration of sustainable development into core areas (math, science, social studies, language arts) teaching at all academic levels in a manner that is locally relevant and meets curriculum objectives. Youth also suggested making *sustainable development* a core curriculum area. Youth suggested educating teachers about sustainable development and providing them with learning opportunities and tools to teach sustainable development to students.

- It was felt that greater emphasis needed to be placed on business and industry, as their *responsibility to community* was thought to be very important.

Question 8. How would you advise the Manitoba Round Table to proceed with the Sustainable Development Education Strategy?

- The challenge must come from government. *Leadership of government is seen as essential. We need the Premier and the whole government thinking and living sustainable development – walking the walk and role modeling.*

- Manitoba Round Table should work with community organizations – *work with schools boards, MKO, city council, universities and colleges.*

- Manitoba government should put *a process in place* to help Manitobans understand sustainability. *People don't know that (sustainable development) strategies are out there already.*

- Manitoba Round Table should provide examples of government implementation of sustainable development initiatives for citizens to learn from.

- The Manitoba Round Table needs to change their documents *to generate excitement.* Children should be involved, as should schools, parents and religious communities.

- The Manitoba Round Table should provide communities with information on sustainable development issues, to enable involvement at the local level. This includes making presentations to city councils, chambers of commerce, MKO, school boards, etc. It was felt to be important to... *present in person, not just send ... documents.*

- The Manitoba Round Table should supply the business sector with information tailored to their specific needs.

- Sustainable development must be an *ongoing campaign which needs a constant thrust to keep it in the public eye.* Family, education system, government, community organizations, business and media all have responsibility for ongoing outreach.

- The Manitoba Round Table should survey and involve teachers and identify their current best practices.

- The Manitoba Round Table and the government should develop a sustainable development education strategy. They should *set goals, set timelines, include stakeholders in process, develop actions plans - preschool through post-secondary, there needs to be a policy on sustainable development education - then ask the people in all (school) subject areas to review the subjects towards sustainable development* and there *should be workshops for teachers.*

- The Manitoba Round Table should concentrate on reaching young people by developing mandatory sustainable development courses at all levels of education as well as integrating the concept into classroom curriculum at all levels of public education.

B. PUBLIC MEETINGS

The following is a summary of the comments from public meetings in five regions of Manitoba.

In all locations, there was significant misunderstanding about the objectives of the public meetings. Some attendees thought it was an information session and therefore came to listen. Others viewed it as an opportunity to discuss concerns about sustainable development application in general, versus a focus on the concept paper. Therefore analysis of the public meetings reflects a broader spectrum of views than originally anticipated.

Thompson, September 22, 1998

- Focused on the important leadership role that government must assume.

- Expressed support for the process of consultation, *Glad the Round Table is here*, and aired many concerns about living in the north.

    - *Stop taking what we have away from us.*
    - *Human resources are moving out.*
    - *Thompson does not even have a personal care facility so people have to move away to Winnipeg.*
    - *We need to look at fairness.... Students immediately lose a grade when they come from Thompson.*

- The concept paper was viewed as *a beautiful concept* but *a huge challenge which may not be possible.*

- There was considerable support for more public meetings and outreach, accompanied by improved public notification.

- Education and health care were perceived to be sub-standard to the quality received in other Manitoba jurisdictions. This was felt to be a great concern to the community.

Dauphin, September 23, 1998

- This group expressed a great deal of concern about environmental problems and supported *looking at studies as to how the biological world functions* and learning more *holistic* approaches to decision-making. *The ecosystem can not stop at the park* (Riding Mountain). *We are destroying our water and our parks.*

- Participants posed numerous questions, indicating a desire for more sustainable development information.

    How would I use my farm in a sustainable development way.
    How do we get a balance?
    Concept paper does not contain "how to..."
    What indicators do we use to measure?

- There was a focus on agriculture as an industry that can provide solutions to environmental degradation rather than creating problems.

- This session, rather than focusing on government and education, considered sustainable development values and related information. Response to the concept paper was minimal and the participants felt it did little to give direction to the group.

Brandon, September 29, 1998

There was more direct response to the concept paper in Brandon than the other public meetings.

- There seemed to be agreement that while education is a critical factor in sustainable development, the concept paper *will not communicate what we need* for the following reasons:
    1. *Wordy and not easy to read.*
    2. *We don't recognize the connection (related to the diagram of overlapping circles on the cover).*
    3. *How is social equity affected by this?*
    4. *People don't have information. Keep it simple.*
    5. *We can't educate by doing one thing.*

- Participants expressed concern about the role of government in sustainable development. They supported a strong leadership position for government and felt that government was not providing this currently. *Government has the most critical role to play; Government must practice what it preaches; It is unforgivable that government is creating all these strategies and is doing nothing with them.*

- Concern was expressed that the economy is given more weight than the environment and/or health and well-being when making sustainable development decisions. It was pointed out that *a strong economy may be a component of unhealthy environment and unhealthy well being.*

- The principles and guidelines were approved of, with some suggested amendments. Participants thought reference to *economic* should be extended *to long range economy* and consideration should be given to a *restructured economy. We measure our well-being by money – we are measuring the wrong things.* It was felt that *efficient use of resources* should include full-cost accounting of environmental effects.

- Several participants supported putting more resources into teacher training. *Supply teacher training with a new curriculum. Our teachers need education.*

- Hands on education and experience as well as formal education were given strong importance throughout this meeting.

Winnipeg, October 16, 1998

- Overall, there was significant support for the concept paper. The group felt that educating for sustainable development was an essential.

- There was considerable approval for the Round Table facilitating public involvement in development of the strategy and *getting to talk about this*.

- Sustainable development education was viewed as *holistic and integrative*. Participants believed that *we can do it with current subject areas in school*. Several presenters didn't *want another curriculum*, and suggested piggybacking on existing courses with respect to formal education.

- The role of the Manitoba government in carrying out its mandate in sustainable development policy and law was questioned throughout this meeting.

- Much concern was expressed about the perceived failure of government to give serious consideration to integrative planning in the environmental assessment process as opposed to fragmented or staged planning. Cumulative impacts of proposals and developments were not seen to be a concern for the Manitoba government, and the precautionary principle was thought to often be overlooked. *Full cost accounting is neglected.*

- The sustainable development model, as implemented in Manitoba, was criticized as being weighted much more towards economic goals than environmental goals, as being utilized for political purposes, and as being *undemocratic*, and lacking public participation. *The level of democracy is in question. The province does not have a good record for public participation.*

- In spite of the very contentious nature of this session, it was clear that all participants wished government to play a critical role in sustainable development implementation and that sustainable development is impossible to achieve without the leadership of government. In their view, this leadership was deficient in Manitoba at that time.

- Great concern was expressed about the performance of the Manitoba government with respect to application of the principles and guidelines of sustainable development to its own policies, programs and actions. One participant stated that in several actions or processes, the Manitoba government breached its own sustainable development principles.

Winnipeg, October 20, 1998

- Most participants misinterpreted this session as an *information delivery session*, and therefore did not come prepared to present.

- Education was seen as *a key integral force in addressing the components of sustainable development*, the components being the environment, the economy and human health and well-being.

- There was strong support for, and interest in, integrating sustainable development into existing programs and curricula. Participants thought it should also be *related to real life. In theory, it is fine, but that is not how it is in the real world for students.*

- This session also confirmed a lack of public confidence in the government of Manitoba's sustainable development performance record. *There is a lot of rhetoric; Government should take great precautions now; Government is not moving hard and fast enough to implement what is legislated; Government must show youth it is committed and illustrate how we can have lasting change.*

- This session also expressed concern that the government of Manitoba appears to give greater weight to economic development and less concern for environmental protection. Adequate review of environmental impact and long term focus on sustainable yield were a priority. *Government has to provide an example.*

- This group was concerned with how the balance between corporate development and environmental protection is being presented in the curriculum and how to create *informed* consumers.

- Market interests were not viewed as compatible with societal interests in some cases. Increased reliance on market forces was viewed as a concern. Government involvement was seen as important. *Government is a representative of a large collection of people and must say something that the market can't address.*

- Sustainable development was viewed as multidisciplinary and not exclusively based in natural science, but also in economics, consumer knowledge, social sciences, political studies, etc.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS FINDINGS

Overall, the respondents:

- Supported an overall sustainable development education strategy – delivered through the formal and informal education systems – with ongoing outreach program development and communication and education of sustainable development concepts.

- Supported the integration of sustainable development into existing curricula to show the interconnection between disciplines.

- Wanted a different approach to educating for sustainable development, including a strong presence for the government of Manitoba and vigorous community outreach and communications.

- Felt the *Educating for Sustainable Development* concept paper was too complex, too vague, and too theoretical. Its application was seen as impractical and problematic.

- Showed support for an *action plan* for sustainable development education.

- Displayed a lack of understanding about the origins of sustainable development policy and its present day application, as well as the Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development's function and relation to government. There was a perception that the government of Manitoba is performing poorly in implementation of its sustainable development strategies.

APPENDIX A - Educating for Sustainable Development Concept Paper

INTRODUCTION

The government of Manitoba has identified sustainable development as one of the cornerstones of its overall economic, environmental, and social agenda. Defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, sustainable development has significant implications for all Manitobans. It is a decision-making process, a way of thinking - a mind set to be incorporated into everything we do. It is also a general philosophy, ethic, and approach to guide individual and collective behaviour.

In keeping with government's commitment, the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy (Manitoba Round Table) has determined that an education strategy is needed in order to fully understand and communicate the importance of sustainable development and to ensure its successful implementation throughout Manitoban society. Educating Manitobans to the new economic, environmental and human health and well-being realities is critical to our future well-being. In order to be successful, we need people who are prepared for responsible, informed, effective and creative participation in the development of this strategy, people who can and are willing to contribute for the benefit of their families and communities. The development of this strategy will be one of the most important learning processes ever undertaken in our province.

For the purpose of discussion and to act as a catalyst, this concept paper is intended to generate public discussion and for use as the basis of public consultations by the Manitoba Round Table. This will ensure that Manitobans have an opportunity to participate in the development of the Sustainable Development Education Strategy.

One thing is certain, there is no single model or formula for this strategy. We will need the support and participation of all partners, including individuals, families, communities, non-government organizations, private sector and government.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Life on earth is a complex system of interdependent components. These components - the environment, economy and societal health and well-being - all play a pivotal role in determining our quality of life. As a result, the environment (the life sustaining processes of the earth and its natural resources), economy (the provision of jobs, incomes and health resulting from economic activity), and societal health and well-being (the overall physical, psychological, spiritual, social health and well-being of individuals, families and communities) are interdependent. A change in one has a significant impact on the others. As an example of this inter-dependence, let us consider the following:

1. A sound environment ensures ecosystems and ecological processes contribute to the health and well-being of present and future generations.
2. A healthy population, as defined above, is a major contributor to a vibrant economy.
3. A strong economy is an integral component of a healthy population and a sound environment.

Education has a vital role to play in promoting and fostering an understanding of this integration. It must support the balance of preserving and protecting the environment while maintaining a healthy economy and vibrant communities.

If we are to achieve sustainable development, it is through people -- individuals, groups, organizations and society, working together. Governments, public institutions, business and industry, individuals, labour, educators, environmentalists and the media world wide are now recognizing that integrating the environment, economy and health and well-being of society is essential and will require significant effort and change. Change is not easy and sometimes difficult to accept. However, this change is possible if the people affected understand the need for it.

A. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Over the course of this century, the relationship between human beings and the planet that gives us life has undergone profound changes. "When the century began, neither human numbers nor technology had the power to radically alter planetary systems. As the century draws to a close, not only do vastly increased human numbers and their activities have the power, but major, unintended changes are occurring in the atmosphere, in soils, in water, among plants and animals, and in the relationships among all of these" (Our Common Future, 1987).

In the last few decades, entrenched behaviour of the world's population has created problems which have adversely affected the quality of life in all nations. Diminishing economic potential from degraded productivity of our resources and increasing public debt has led to the inability of nations to provide jobs, incomes and basic social, health and educational services for their citizens. In response to this growing trend, the United Nations established the World Commission on Environment and Development. Their report entitled *Our Common Future* brought the concept of sustainable development to the global stage and emphasized the links between problems of growth, technology, environment, and provided a solution - sustainable development.

As expressed in that report, achieving sustainable development means designing a process to change the character of society. This includes altering the way government and public institutions as well as the private sector, address the essential problems affecting society, how the economy is managed, the way business is done, what is taught and learned in schools and in the workplace, and how we conduct and live our lives, both as individuals and as members of society.

The next few decades are crucial. We, as Manitobans, must consider new patterns of development - development that is sustainable and secures the future of the planet.

B. NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1987, the Canadian National Task Force on Environment and Development released its response to the U.N. report. The National Task Force Report outlined 40 recommendations, encouraging industry and governments to develop and implement policies and actions aimed at integrating environmental, economic and social considerations into decision-making.

The Task Force identified a need for sustainable development to be incorporated into all levels of public education. It suggested that the importance of educating children to the new economic, environmental and societal realities could not be overstated. Children need a better understanding of how the economy, the environment and the overall health and well-being of society affect each other. Their future well-being depends upon that interaction.

Recognizing the importance of the formal education systems role in furthering sustainable development, the National Round Table on Environment and Economy created the non-profit organization Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF) in 1991. LSF continues to work with educators from across Canada to integrate the concepts and principles of sustainable development into the curricula at all grade levels. This organization is developing a framework that will enable the concepts of sustainability education to be integrated into policies of Ministries of Education, schools, curricula, teacher training and professional development.

C. PROVINCIAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1989, the government set up the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy. Comprised of a broad cross section of Manitobans, their purpose was to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the National Task Force and to develop a sustainable development strategy for Manitoba.

Since then, Manitoba has set goals for building sustainable development into our lives and the overall operations of government.

In March of 1994, after five years of work by the Manitoba Round Table and four years of consultations with Manitobans, the Government of Manitoba released the *Sustainable Development Strategy for Manitobans*. This strategy includes a set of component strategies to guide our actions, activities and decisions.

In 1997, royal assent was given to Manitoba's *Sustainable Development Act*. This Act is designed to have Manitoba's public sector incorporate sustainable development into their

day-to-day decision making and overall management and operations. Government departments, crown corporations, health authorities, local governments, school divisions, universities and colleges will be called upon to carry out their activities consistent with the principles and guidelines of sustainable development.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

In Manitoba, sustainable development has become a driving force in the proper planning and development of communities. These activities are carried out through more than 80 Community Round Tables across the province. Community Round Tables offer residents from rural and northern communities a process through which people from all walks of life can get together in a formal setting, take a close look at their community, develop a plan for its future and work together to implement that plan.

Out of the established Community Round Tables, 59 have identified vision statements, goals, actions, or proposals to develop and improve their communities. Issues that they have addressed include business/entrepreneurship, tourism, recreation, retention of services, education, health, agriculture, heritage and culture, the environment, an aging population and youth.

EDUCATING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development education will enable Manitobans to make decisions and take actions that fully account for the needs of present and future generations by integrating the environment, economy and health and well-being of people. Sustainable development education focuses on creating an understanding of and appreciation for the interrelated components of sustainable development - the environment, the economy and people's health and well-being.

Implementing sustainable development will require changes in the way we look at the world and, in particular, in the way Manitobans, as a community, approach important decisions. These decisions include how our children are educated, how we as individuals live and conduct our lives, how government and society's public institutions address the essential problems affecting our lives, and how business and development is done. These changes will require the participation of all Manitobans with a wide range of skills, knowledge, values and perspectives. While not exhaustive, these changes will include:

- a full understanding of the interdependence of the environment, the economy and human health and well-being
- the ability to communicate effectively about local, national and global issues related to sustainability
- a responsibility to think globally when we act locally

- integrated rather than fragmented approaches. People will need to combine knowledge from various disciplines and work across artificial boundaries that tend to fragment decision-making
- knowledge in key areas such as ecology, technology, economics and the social and natural sciences
- the ability to bring appropriate knowledge and skills from a variety of disciplines
- the ability and willingness to work cooperatively with others to identify and address common concerns and opportunities
- an appreciation of the role of human ingenuity and individual creativity in ensuring survival and the search for appropriate and sustainable progress
- the ability to think critically about complex global issues
- the ability to make well informed policy decisions
- the ability to be self-directed and to question established ways of doing things in order to arrive at creative alternatives
- the ability to make appropriate lifestyle changes that contribute to sustainability

Education is a key process by which people develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. This process is life-long and includes both formal and informal ways of learning. Communities, individuals, educational institutions, parents, business, labour, religious institutions, government, the media, environmental organizations, and others play a critical role in educating for sustainable development. In fact, we must recognize and celebrate the efforts and achievements of these groups and individuals. However, we can not lose sight of the fact that we still have a great deal more to do. These groups and individuals can do much more in all aspects of educating for sustainable development. By working together with an increased openness to diverse views we can encourage more emphasis on interdisciplinary studies, greater awareness of linkages between and among the environment, economy, and human health and well-being, a stronger commitment to education for sustainable development, and the willingness to work with others to learn.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

While we have begun to identify the goals for the education strategy, the manner in which we will achieve these goals will require a great deal of thought and input from all Manitobans. Your involvement, will be critical to the success of the strategy.
The Manitoba Round Table for Sustainable Development will be undertaking a public consultation process and invites all citizens of Manitoba to help chart the course for a sustainable future.

APPENDIX B - Overview of Public Participation Processes

FOCUS GROUP TESTING						OPEN PUBLIC SESSIONS
Date	**Location**	**# participants invited**	**# participants attended**	**# of focus groups**	**# in each focus group**	**# attended**
Sept. 22, 1998	Thompson	40	9	2	5/4	3
Sept. 23, 1998	Dauphin	37	7	1	7	6
Sept. 29, 1998	Brandon	40	24	3	8	16
Oct. 1, 1998	Portage la Prairie	33	5	1	5	3[1]
Oct. 6, 1998	Steinbach	27	3	1	3	0
Oct. 8, 1998	Winkler	29	0	N/A	N/A	3
Oct. 16, 1998	Winnipeg	56	14	3	5/5/4	12
Oct. 20, 1998	Winnipeg (francophone)		10	1	10	7
Oct. 15, 1998	U of M	Graduate Students[2]	5	1	5	N/A

MANITOBA YOUTH ROUND TABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT YOUTH CONFERENCE			
Date	**Location**	**# Participants**	**Participants' Communities**
Nov. 13, 1998	Winnipeg	70 (approx)	Beausejour Brandon Erickson Gimli Grunthal MacGregor Rosa Selkirk St. Andrews Teulon Winnipeg

[1] Media (no session conducted)

[2] Round Table Education Subcommittee was invited to conduct a focus group session with 5 graduate students